



August 10, 2007

To: Primary Care Physicians and Clinicians

From: \_\_\_ on behalf of the Upper Midwest Fistula First Coalition

RE: Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Resources



Caring for patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a great challenge for both primary care providers and nephrologists. This challenge increases when patients do not receive a timely referral to a nephrologist. This delayed referral leads to emergency dialysis with higher morbidity, mortality and excessive cost. Emergency dialysis limits the dialysis modality choice, endangers the ability to place a permanent vascular access prior to dialysis initiation, precludes psychological preparation of patients and family, and frequently necessitates hospitalization for a catastrophic complex illness.



Early referral of chronic kidney disease patients offers many advantages. In addition to beginning the process of education and preparation for renal replacement therapy, benefits include:

- A diligent search may reveal a potentially reversible cause of renal failure.
- A number of measures may be implemented to preserve the remaining renal function, e.g., good control of blood pressure, glucose control in diabetics, nutritional guidance, and avoidance of nephrotoxic drugs.
- Upper extremity vessels may be preserved for placement of a native arteriovenous fistula, the most reliable type of vascular access.
- Treatment of anemia with erythropoietin may significantly improve life quality.
- Secondary hyperparathyroidism may be treated with phosphate binders and calcitriol.
- Referral to a team consisting of a nephrologist, renal dietitian, dialysis nurse, social worker and financial counselor allows time to establish the best treatment modality for the patient, develop financial support if needed and to allay the fears of both patient and family.



In order to assist you in identifying and treating chronic kidney disease in your patients, we are providing you two resources to use within your practice. The first resource is a pocket guide developed by the National Kidney Disease Outcomes Quality Initiative (KDOQI) of the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) and includes the Clinical Action Plan to assist you in developing an individualized CKD plan of care for your patients, and Clinical Interventions for Adults that will provide a summary of recommended interventions for patients with complications associated with CKD. The second resource is a wall chart that displays two algorithms, a CKD assessment algorithm that will assist you in identifying patients as having CKD, and a treatment algorithm that will assist you in developing a treatment plan for patients with CKD. These resources are also available to download electronically at [www.esrdnet11.org/coalition](http://www.esrdnet11.org/coalition).



We hope you will find this a useful tool in working with your patients who may need treatment or referral for their kidney disease. If you have any questions please feel free to contact \_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.